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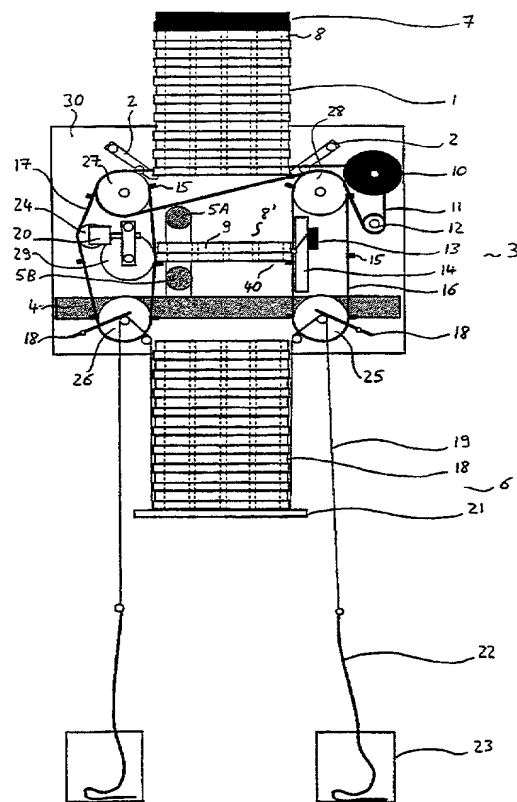
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| <p><b>(51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>:</b> G01N 35/04, G02B 21/00</p> <p><b>(21) International Application Number:</b> PCT/EP00/06245</p> <p><b>(22) International Filing Date:</b> 3 July 2000 (03.07.2000)</p> <p><b>(25) Filing Language:</b> English</p> <p><b>(26) Publication Language:</b> English</p> <p><b>(30) Priority Data:</b><br/>99202173.3 3 July 1999 (03.07.1999) EP</p> <p><b>(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):</b> JANSSEN PHARMACEUTICA N.V. [BE/BE]; Turnhoutseweg 30, B-2340 Beerse (BE).</p> | <p><b>(72) Inventor; and</b><br/><b>(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only):</b> NUYENS, Roger, François, Gabrielle, Armand [BE/BE]; c/o Janssen Pharmaceutica N.V., Turnhoutseweg 30, B-2340 Beerse (BE).</p> <p><b>(74) Agents:</b> BIRD, William, E. et al.; Bird Goën &amp; Co, Vilvoordsebaan 92, B-3020 Winksele (BE).</p> <p><b>(81) Designated States (national):</b> AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW.</p> <p><b>(84) Designated States (regional):</b> ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian</p> |
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- (54) Title:** APPARATUS FOR TRANSPORTING CARRIERS TO A PROCESSING STATION AND METHOD OF OPERATING THE SAME



**(57) Abstract:** The present application a transporter (100) for transporting specimen carriers (8) to a processing station (40), comprising a first vertical input magazine (1) of carriers (8), a second vertical output magazine (6) of carriers, and a singulator (3) located between the first and second magazines (1, 6). The first and second magazines (1, 6) may be located one above the other. Preferably, the first and second magazines (1, 6) and the singulator (3) are vertically aligned so that a carrier (8) follows a straight vertical path. This provides a compact arrangement which takes up the minimum of floor space in the laboratory. The singulator (3) receives carriers (8) one-at-a-time from the input magazine (1) and moves them vertically to a processing position (40). After processing, the singulator (3) then delivers each carrier to an output location where it is transferred to the output magazine (6). The singulator (3) may move a carrier (8) upwards or downwards at the processing position (40) independent of any movement of the carriers (8) in the input and/or output magazines (1, 6). The drives for the input and output magazine (1, 6) are preferably simply gravity drives but the present invention is not limited thereto. The drive (10) for the singulator is preferably a stepping motor or DC servo-motor.

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